News Release

March 29, 1995

CRTC STATEMENT ON ALLEGATIONS OF HIDDEN TAX

OTTAWA/HULL -- There is absolutely no hidden tax. The Commission authorizes rates for basic cable services, which reflect necessary capital investments, as well as the costs of programming distributed by the cable companies. As the regulator of the Canadian broadcasting system, the CRTC must maintain balance between the interests of all its publics: consumers, creators and distributors.

The Commission's decisions are always taken after open public process -- in this case, a nationally televised hearing which, two years ago, considered 710 written submissions and 126 oral presentations. Inevitably, and taken in isolation, some decisions can be made to appear to favour one group over another. But in the long run, we must seek a balance of interests. Parliament's own *Broadcast Act* obliges us to maintain this balance. If anything, the heart of its mandate to the CRTC is to nurture "the production and distribution of more and better Canadian programming" (Section 3).

Of course consumers want choice. But consumers are also Canadians who want quality Canadian choices. Without the kind of support for high-standard Canadian programs offered by the cable production fund (established after the above open public hearing), there would not be many Canadian choices. There would be very little of Canada -- its ideas, values, realities and heroes -- on its own screens.

This desire for Canadian choices is not just what Parliament has clearly expressed in the Broadcasting Act. The Commission believes that it is also what the great majority of Canadians support.

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